

A New Quære,

At this time seasonably to be considered, as we
tender the advancement of

TRUTH & PEACE;

Viz.

Whether it be fit, according to the Principles
of true Religion, and State, to settle any
Church - Government over the Kingdome
hastily, or not ; and with the Power com-
monly desired, in the hands of the Mini-
sters.

By JOHN SALT MARSH, Preacher of the Word
at *Brasfield in Kent.*

2 Cor. 10. 8. *Our authority (which the Lord hath given for Instru-
ction, and not for destruction.)*



LONDON,

Printed for *Giles Calvert*, at the Signe of the
Black Spread-Eagle, at the West-End of
S. PAULS. 1648.

A NEW

At this time seasonably to be considered as

THE NEW

Whether it befit according to the People
of true Religion, and State, to let the
Church-Government over the Kingdom
hastily, or not; and with the Power com-
monly desired, in the hands of the Mini-
sters.

By JOHN SALTMARSH, Preacher of the Word
at Walsingham.

2 Cor. 10. 8. Our authority (which the Devil may use for his purpose)
is not as this world's.



Printed for Giles Calvert, at the Signe of the
Black Spicard-Eagle, at the Well-Land of
2. PAULS. 1640.

A Quære:

Whether it be fit, according to the Principles of true Religion, and State, to stifle any Church-Government over the Kingdom hastily, or not; and with the Power commonly desired, in the Hands of the Ministers.



I. He Rules laid down in the Word for practicall Obedience, are these in part; *Let every one be fully perswaded in his own mind, Rom. 14. 5. ver. 23 and whatsoever is not of faith, is sin.* Now the setting of any Government upon a people who are yet generally untaught in the nature and grounds of it, is to put upon the people the practice of that wherein it is impossible they can be fully perswaded in their minds, and so either on a necessity of sin or misery.

2. There is great danger of bringing people under a Popish implicite Obedience, by forcing on a practice of that which they scarce know, or know but in part: And this is against the *Nationall Covenant*, to side with any Principles of *Popery*: And we know it by experience, that the people have been ever devoted to any thing the State sets up; all the disputes or conscience of the common people usually ending in this, Whether it be established by Law or no; and going usually no higher nor further then a *Statute Or Act of State* for their Religion.

3. *Christ Iesus* himselfe could as easily have seetled his *Gosbell-Government* by miracle, as any can now by a *Civill power*, if there had been such a *primary or moral necessity* of establishing it so soon upon a people scarce enlightned for any part of it: But we see the contrary, first in himselfe, he taught long, and *Iohn* before him, and to the *Disciples*; and the *gifts* for Government were not given till he ascended, and the *Modell* for Government not brought forth but by degrees, and as people fell in and were capable of the *Yoke*, and would mould more easily to the *Commandments of Christ*; and whether then or no, is yet a Question which some who have

See in M.
Colemans
Sermon.

fit out the debates too, though not with me, who am fully assured of a power of order which the Apostle joyced to behold, though a power with as little dominion in Government as tradition in W^{or}ship.

4. We never read in the new Testament of Episcopall government settled upon any that were not brought first under Gospel obedience by the power of the Word and Spirit, which thousands of Congregations in this Kingdom are not: For as in material Buildings Stone and Timber are not to be elapt together without hewing and squaring, so nor in the spiritual: And whereas in the Temple there should neither be Axe nor Hammer heard, because things were fitted before hand, and so laid together: I question how this could be in our Congregations now: I believe there would be now more of the Axe and the Hammer heard, then of the building seen.

5. We have found by experience, that the speedy setting of Government upon the Nation, hath made Reformation take little root, save in the out ward man, or formall Obedience; and the reason was, Because they received not Reformation first in the power of the Word, but of the State, which went not so deep into their Consciences, but they could part with it at any time upon a Law: Oh then, *Why do not daies speake, and multitudes of yeares teach knowledge?*

6. It is against the nature of Christs description of himselfe, and against that suitability which he presses for, amongst all such as should submit to his Commandements; He shall not strive, nor cry, neither shall any man heare his voyce in the streets, Matth. 11. 19. *My yoke is easie, and my burden light,* Matth. 11. 29. *His Commandements are not grievous,* 1 Joh. 5. 3. *Neither do men put new wine into old bottles.* All which cannot be fulfilled in the Parochiall Congregations.

7. The more time for trying the spirits, and proving all things, there is lesse danger to that State of errings in things received and authorized, and of involving it selfe into the designs of Ecclesiasticall power, then which nothing hath sooner broken the Civill power, as may be seen in Popish Kingdoms, and our late Prelaticall. There can be no great danger in the not sudden incorporating the two powers: Since Moses is not alive to bring down the just Pairne of the Tabernacle, there may a new Star arise, which was not seen at first; which, if we shut up our selves too-soone while the smoke is in the Temple, cannot appeare.

8. We have not yet any experiment of our new Clergie, who are many of them branches of the old stock, and so may weild the Government too much of the Episcopall Faction, as the Samaritans did with the Jewish Government, because they were not naturall Jews. It is not safe trusting a power too far into those hands. Our Brethren of Scotland have been more used to the way of Presbytery, and may better trust one another upon mutuall experience, then we can yet.

9. We

9. We experience in part some remainders of Prelacy working in many, which shewes a constitution not so cleare nor pure as the Disciples of Christ should have; then whether let be safe committing the power too suddenly: For though I question not but some may be like the *ten*, yet there are others like the *two Brethren* who strove which should be greatest, till the Lord ended the difference, *It shall not be so amongst you*. We find the hottest Controversie is now moved about Church-government; and there hath been most written and spoken this way, and in most violence: Now when the contention for power is so much, and the Controversie streames most in Government, we may soon discern dispositions. Well, is it good parting with the stakes yet while there is such quarrelling for them, & when one party cannot but take it for an injury, if wholly given to the other? It is to be feared, there is too much of man; because the bias runs most in these times towards this one truth of government, & many other are wholly set by, which might well be lookt upon with it; which if there were not a Principle in man more fitted for a truth of this kind than any other, would not be: But every truth hath its age and season. This only for caution.

10. There is no Religion established by State, but there is some proportion in the two Powers, and some compliancy betwixt the Civill and Ecclesiasticall; so as the establishing the one, will draw with it some motions in the other: And we all see how hazardous it is to disinteresse any in the Civill part, even in Kingdomes that are more firme, as *France*, where the Protestants are partly allowed their Religion in pay for their Civill engagements; and so in other States. And sure I am, that State is most free, where the conscience is least straitned, where the Tares and the Wheat grow together till the harvest.

11. Our parties or dissenting Brethren being now together, and clasped by interest against the common enemy, this foundation of common unity is such as may draw in both affections and judgements if not too suddenly determined into Hereticks and Schismatics: It is possible, while a Controversie is long suspended, and time given for conclusion of things, Opinions may be sooner at peace: A fire let alone, may dye out under that wood which stirred in would kindle it. The Contentions of Brethren are like the strong bars of a Castle; and a Brother that is offended is harder to be won then a strong City, Prov. 18. 19.

OBJECTIONS.

I.

But the Temple was builded with all speed in Nehemiah's time; and therefore, &c. And Haggai calls to the building, Is it time? Hag. 1. 4.

Ans.

Yea, but the materiall Patterns was more clearly left and known then the Gospell-patternes: The other were more in the letter, and these more in the Spirit. Now there must be a proving all things, else there may be more hast then good speed; and the Temple may be built by a false Pattern as well as a true, and then better no Building, then no right Cedar to build with. And there were Prophets then, who knew the periods of times, and could Prophesie, as Haggai and Zechariah; but none so exactly now; and these knew both the fashion and the time for Building. Yet who ought not to hasten the Temple, if the Timber be ready, and if the Apostles and Prophets be there for a foundation, and Iesus Christ for chiefe Corner-stone? Ephes. 2.

Object. II.

But Vice, Heresies and Schisms will grow too fast.

Ans.

So they might have done from Iohns first Sermon to Pauls Epistles; and the sending of the Spirit; but yet you see there was no Government, till after, settled upon the people of God. And if Heresies stir up their Patrons against the State, the Magistrate beares not the Sword in vaine? And if morall transgressions, let the Magistrate be set on in every place to quicken the Statutes; and Preachers every where sent forth to publish the Gospell. And what if the Prince of Persia withstand for a while? Truth is otherwise armed from heaven: Though Satan be in the wilderness with Christ, yet Christ shall conquer. It is the Papists and the Prelates Jealousies, to keep up their supposed truths, by suspecting every thing that appears for an enemy. The Gospell dares walk abroad with boldnesse and simplicity, when Millions of men, like melancholly people, feare every thing they meet will kill them: For the Angell that comes down from heaven hath great power, and the earth is lightened with his glory, Rev. 18. 1.

FINIS.

